GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3943
ANSWERED ON:21.04.2008
COUNSELLING UNITS IN ARMED FORCES
Kurup Adv. Suresh

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether counselling units are functional in all the wings of Armed Forces to address stress related issues among personnel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the functioning of these units to help their personnel to overcome difficult emotional situations?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) to (c): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3943 FOR ANSWERON 21.4.2008

Stress counselling mechanism is existing in the Armed Forces to address stress related issues among the personnel. No separate counselling unit has been set up by the Army. However, counselling facilities are available in 22 Psychiatric Centres. In addition to this, arrangements have been made to ensure availability of psychological counselling at unit level. A total number of 46 Army Medical Corps Personnel have been trained as psychological counsellors along with 74 non-medical personnel who have been trained as Unit counsellors. Two Psychiatric Centres in operational areas, one each in Northern and Eastern Sectors have been augmented to address the stress related problems of troops deployed in these areas. Army is continuously evolving steps to improve the mental health of its troops and providing them with stress busting facilities.

2. In the Navy, counselling units are functioning in the Psychiatric Centres located at Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam and Kochi. Besides, Psychiatrists from different Commands visit remote places like Andaman & Nicobar Islands to attend to the problems of persons located in such areas. Senior sailors from non-medical establishments are also being trained to perform counselling duties in their respective units. Civilian counsellors have also been employed in family clinics at major Naval stations for attending to the requirements of the families of Naval personnel.

3. In the Air Force, counselling is being done by Medical Officers to address stress related issues among its personnel. Non medical personnel have also been trained to function as counsellors. A total number of 62 psychological counsellors have been employed on trial basis over the past year at a few selected locations on part time basis to augment the availability of counsellors.